1: Raswan T-3 (1913-35) 1947 MD4 Rwala
Bedouins MJ4

224 ily narrowed as it drew near. They started hundreds of gazelles that fled past us, but Sheykh Tai' and his men shot only a few of the fat bucks in their midst.

During the day's hunting, our party gave chase to fifteen wolves, of which nine were killed. One of them had made a kill of two gazelle kids, whose remains were still lying about. The mother, who perhaps at first had fled, returned and stood near by, bleating, as gazelles will. I could not bear the pitiful cries of the poor animal and gave her the *coup de grâce* with a bullet. It was the only gazelle I have ever shot, for I could never bring myself to kill these beautiful, graceful creatures.

It was evening before our body of huntsmen, laden with booty, arrived back in camp.

574 Three days after the wolf-hunt a slave of Mishal ibn Faris, Chief of the Shammar Bedouins, arrived, with an invitation to me from his master to visit him and his tribe, which was then camping south of the Jabal Sinjar. [431] He also sent me as a present a golden-brown *aba*, such [486] as is worn by the Shammar in Hayil. It was to serve as a symbol which would ensure a safe journey for me, and his slave would be my guide.

619 628 The Shammar and the Tai' Bedouins are hereditary enemies and their pasture lands are always, and were especially now, very dangerous regions in which to wander. Therefore, this was an act of particular courtesy and attention on the part of the old *sheykh* to give me safe conduct to his camp.

574 431 The following day I bade farewell to the Tai' Bedouins. Unfortunately, I could not accept the mare

l: Raswan T-3 (1913-35) 1947 MD4 Rwala
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which their chieftain had offered me as a souvenir, for we had to travel by automobile. But I accepted two rarer gifts, and these heirlooms to boot. They were an ancient wood-carved coffee mortar, which had been in the possession of Sheykh Tai's family for generations. This pledge of his affection and friendship (as he called it) he had wrapped in an equally precious gift—three pieces of black cloth, artistically embroidered in gilt-silver thread, with verses from the Koran in Arabic calligraphy. They were choice pieces of the Ka'aba, which Sheykh Tai's great-grandfathers had brought many years ago from Mecca.

Loath as I was to accept such precious gifts, I was constrained to do so.

"We are brothers," said Sheykh Tai'. "Like the wolves. God be with thee. May He direct thy footsteps some future day into my dominions, so that I may meet thee again."

After bidding farewell to this wild, romantic and noble man, we cruised about in our old motor-car for five days along the southern foothills of the Jabal Sinjar, visiting the camps of various lesser tribes. Motor fuel we obtained from their *shiyukhs*.

Nowadays, nearly all of them own motor-cars, and on their migrations they carry a fairly large stock of gasoline with them on their camels.

At last we reached the wide plain through which runs the old historic caravan route from Deyr ez-Zor to Mosul and Baghdad. There we found the first outposts of the Shammar, and there also we parted from the faithful Ibrahim. I paid him handsomely and sent the

[See pp. 163-167 Cat. 116 for explanation of this statement—Analysis]

1: Raswan T-3 (1913-35) 1947 MD4 Rwala
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man without a single enemy", Arabs have called him to me. 157 554

I was Mishal's guest for several weeks. In the company of his son Naif, I was able to look over a large number of Arab horses amongst the different Shammar clans. One two-year-old Saqlawi-Shaifi stallion of purest blood pleased me exceedingly. One day I enquired of the *sheykh's* secretary if he thought it possible that Mishal would sell this stallion. It had indeed come to my ears that Mishal had refused an offer of eight hundred gold pounds from the French Remount Service. From my experience, I knew that really thoroughbred Arab horses were quite rare and therefore exceedingly expensive. Considering the stallion's breeding, the French offer certainly did not appear too high, when one remembers that foreign military commissions and breeders have paid in the desert anything up to three thousand pounds gold for blue-blooded stallions. 231 435

I asked the scribe to submit my offer to his *sheykh* up to one thousand pounds gold. I also declared myself ready to make the customary presents to the *katib* (secretary) and to the slave who had looked after the stallion from birth. [431]

That same day I sat with Mishal and his son Naif and their friends until late into the night. By the light of the campfire I showed them photographs of Arab horses, among them the stallions and mares which I had bought from the stud of Lady Anne Blunt's daughter in England, for the ranch in California. 574 231 572

"Is it known to thee," asked Mishal, "that Lord Blunt and my father Faris formed a blood brotherhood fifty

1: Raswan T-3 (1913-35) 1947 MD4 Rwala
Bedouins M54

574 years ago? He, as thou, loved our fast and enduring run-
231 ners, those 'Drinkers of the Wind', which Allah be-
572 stowed on our forefather Ishmael."

Neither the scribe nor anyone else said a word about the stallion, and I dared not ask again; for I imagined that Mishal was particularly fond of this young horse.

574 The day of my departure came. The patriarchal
431 *sheykh* and I exchanged words of formal farewell. Then he led me aside and bade me sit down with him at the farthest tent-peg. After a few minutes of silence, he took two documents from a leather pouch and said: "I have long noticed that thou hast taken the Saqlawi colt to thy heart. He is the best of our breeding, and I am happy to make thee a present of him, that thou mayest always remember our friendship and noble horses. Take the young stallion with thee and mention no thanks nor price, so that this remembrance may live forever unclouded in our hearts."

"The Lord be good to thee, O Mishal ibn Faris," I replied, "for that I am allowed to part from thee with such happy memories."

What more could I say in response to his simple
[181] words? I knew the Bedouins. To be open-handed makes most of them happy; and further, Mishal was a very
[423] rich man. To him "belonged" not only the Shammar in the Northern Jesirah (Mesopotamia), but he actually owned sixty-nine villages and their cultivated lands on the Khabur River. I could only hope that God would grant me the opportunity some time of showing my heartfelt thanks to Mishal in some special way.

1: Raswan T-3 (1913-35) 1947 MD4 Rwala
Bedouins MJ4

One of the documents the *sheykh* handed to me was a deed of gift and a token of his friendship; the other set forth the pedigree of the colt. Mishal rose to his feet. He took me by the hand to set me on my way, and together we walked far out into the desert. He spoke no word and I made no attempt to break the silence. My eyes were held by the picture of the powerful young stallion which was being led ahead of us by Naif and a slave. Full of fire and grace, with prancing steps, he looked the living epitome of this wild and romantic land.

When some tribesmen rode by on their mares, the young stallion stopped still, his whole body tense, neck arched, and small head held high. His chest quivered as he neighed in long-drawn silvery notes. His uplifted tail flowed out from his croup like a cascade of water. He was surely as magnificent as any of those aboriginal wild horses, which, according to Bedouin lore, Ishmael caught in the Nufud desert. "Black-skinned antelopes (*kubay-lan*) they were called of old, by reason of the black rims around the eyes, which make them look as if they had been painted with *kuhl* (pure antimony)."

The *sheykh* at last called to my companions, who had gone ahead, to halt. Looking back, Mishal and I saw the great camp a long way off. The old chief laid his hands in blessing on the forehead of the young stallion, and said to me: " 'Amud,' I have named thy stallion. It is a name of my people. The peace of God be with thee forever."

Then he kissed both my cheeks and the hoof of the horse, and strode back to his tents.

1: Raswan T-3 (1913-35) 1947 MD4 Rwala
Bedouins MJ4

•431 The French commandant at Deyr-ez-Zor had the two
231 documents translated for me under his official seal.

One document, bearing the seal of Mishal, mentions Sir Wilfrid S. Blunt as the friend of Faris Pasha al-Jarba, and myself as Mishal's own particular friend, and certified that he had presented to me the Saqlawi-Shaifi stallion for love of me. The second document, setting forth the pedigree of the stallion, began and ended with excerpts from the Koran, the Hadith, and the Arabian poet Imrul-Quais.

It bore the seals of three Shammar *shiyukhs*—Mishal ibn Faris, Hassan al-Amud, and Jajan ibn Massiul, who testified regarding the horse as follows: "It is a Saqlawi, and we bear witness before Allah that the young stallion is a Shaifi, bred of a Saqlawi-Shaifi of the same pedigree; that the Grand-sire was a Saqlawi as was his dam a Saqlawiyah-Shaifiyah, whose noble race has remained pure and famous amongst us Arab people."

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Bedouins MJ4

proposes to wage war on So-and-So, and on such and such a date. This would not be tolerated. He must carry the public opinion of the tribe with him. Hence, before anything is undertaken, secret meetings and daily talks are held with the tribal greybeards and men of experience. Once a decision has been come to, however, and the battle joined, the leadership lies with the shaikh, and his orders must be obeyed.

To maintain his influence in the piping times of peace, the shaikh must prove himself literally the "father of his people". He must know the family troubles of every man and must give good and fair decisions when cases are brought to him for settlement. Above all, he must not be miserly, and must keep open house. No name has a more unworthy meaning, or leaves a nastier taste in the mouth of the Badawin than the epithet *bakhil*, or "stingy one". Once this name *bakhil* sticks to a chief, his influence is at an end. Hence a successful shaikh must always have coffee going in his tent, pestle must ring on mortar from morn to night. Even this is not enough; for his hungry tribesmen, the majority of whom would scarcely taste meat from year's end to year's end, expect from their shaikh an occasional feast and the slaying of a camel, that all may eat their fill. The shaikh can reasonably stage a feast on the arrival of an important guest, to celebrate a wedding, or circumcision ceremony, or the like.

A great shaikh will go even further and will regularly send presents of frocks and material for dresses to the wives of the less fortunate members of his tribe. This keeps the women happy, and indirectly their husbands also. The shaikh's chief lady also has herself a lot to do in keeping up her husband's prestige, and the wives of the junior members of the clan are for ever calling on her and explaining their difficulties, in the unexpressed hope that assistance to the wardrobe or kitchen will be forthcoming. The great Faisal al Duwish was a master at keeping the women of the tribe happy, and it paid: the same must also be said of His Majesty King 'Abdul 'Aziz ibn Sa'ud.

HARD LIFE OF THE INDIVIDUAL BADAWIN

The average Badawin has a hard and difficult existence, and may be said to be always hungry and ill-clad. The main hardship he is at all times faced with is lack of money and inability to make any, by

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Bedouins MJ4

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GIFTS

Kings, such as Bin Sa'ud, great Princes, and important shaikhs in the desert, will press their honoured guests to stay and partake of their hospitality up to ten days, but after that period is up, the guest is supposed to take his leave (*yatarakhas*). Both sides will, before parting, exchange presents. The host to his guest and to all the members of his party, and the guest to the servants and retainers of his host.

Should a prince or big shaikh visit another of like status to himself and by invitation, then the arriving guest brings special gifts for his host, his host's ladies and his host's servants. These usually take the form of coffee, bags of rice, men's cloaks, strips of silk for men's *ʿibúns*, or overgarments, and coloured cloth for women's frocks.

This giving of gifts among persons of rank is an important and essential part of the ritual of hospitality, and has before now fallen hardly on British officials, who have been sent on special missions, for example to Bin Sa'ud's court.

I recollect that on the two occasions when I visited H.M. King 'Abdul 'Aziz Bin Sa'ud with Sir Percy Cox (then H.M.'s High Commissioner for Iraq), Sir Percy on leaving paid Rs.600 as largesse to the King's servants and retainers, while he and all his party (Europeans) received each a mare in return, with a complete change of Arab garments apiece. The servants received *'abbas*, *kaffiyahs* and *agáls*.

Similarly, when I accompanied Sir Hugh Biscoe (H.M.'s Political Resident in the Persian Gulf) to Hufuf and Khabari Wadha respectively, I distributed Rs.500 on his behalf to the King's retainers.

I mention the above, for it is important that a benign Government should abandon the English standpoint and loosen Treasury purse-strings in recognition of the fact that such an exchange of gifts is a vital custom of the country, and if adequate gifts were not made, its representatives would lose face and influence, and give offence.

In January 1936, when H.M. Bin Sa'ud visited Kuwait, he distributed *ʿibúns* and *'abbas* to three hundred of the shaikh's retainers, gave Rs.50,000 to deserving persons as presents, and distributed Rs.10,000 to the poor, mostly in person. He followed this up by later presenting

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eleven motor-cars to the shaikh's relations. The shaikh for his part disbursed Rs.95,000, including Rs.25,000 to the King's sons, as well as 750 *zibúns* and *'abbas* to retainers.

This giving of gifts by a host to his guest is more particularly the prerogative of the host if he be the big man and the guest be the poor man. It follows then that any Badawin shaikh who comes on a visit to his King, his prince or his paramount shaikh, and is hospitably received by him, expects to receive some sort of present before he departs. "After all," thinks he, "have I not come a distance of many miles, have I not shown my loyalty and have I not imparted much information of value?"

I had the honour to be for seven and a half years the Political Agent of Kuwait, and I can testify that this officer can similarly maintain good relations with the great desert tribes of Iraq, Hasa, Najd and Jabal Shammar, only by keeping open house at all times and receiving with due honour the shaikhs of these tribes whenever they come to the town to purchase supplies. These shaikhs call, as a measure of duty, receive coffee, sherbet and other refreshments and before departing are given a present of cash, clothing or coffee by the Political Agent.

The expenditure is worth while, for each man has given a full picture of what is happening in his country, and has unconsciously provided the official with much valuable intelligence. Were the Political Agent to cease giving his guests a present, however small, they would immediately cease to come and see him, and in a very short time indeed H.M.'s representative would find himself blind and deaf. He certainly would get little news out of the local powers, seeing that in self-defence their policy must always be to keep H.M.'s representative more or less in the dark or at least in blinkers.

THE SALT BOND

To have eaten with a person gives a guest security from the man who has fed him and entertained him, and even from his host's people or tribe, for a period of three days.

Even if you merely drink coffee with your host, this counts as if you had eaten his food.

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backbone, the muscles of the shoulders and the muscles of the leg near the knuckle: the tongue, the kidneys, the cheek bits and the eyes, are also well-known delicacies. The fat of the tail is always looked upon as the guest's particular right. The Arabian sheep is of the fat-tailed variety unknown in England. Round the central dish of rice and meat, the shaikh places two or three bowls of *leben*, with lumps of rather dirty butter floating in it—also a plate or two of dates. The guest, after finishing his meal, drinks *leben*, and then turns to the dates, which he eats with the butter floating in the *leben*. These dates and butter, especially if the dates are fresh (*ratab*), are delicious.

Prior to the meal, and after the meal, coffee is handed round. Among the Badawin coffee is rather a poor and watery stuff, and following the Najd fashion is made with lots of *hail* (cardamum) in it. After lunch, it is polite to thank your host with a *Allah i kathir khair ak* or a *'An'am Allah 'alaik* (God increase your good works! or God reward you!).

It is also quite correct to make pleasant remarks about the good cooking of the housewife, and if you catch a glimpse of her, as you often may behind the *ǫáta* or curtain dividing the women's from the men's quarters, you may say *Allah i kathir khair ich ya ma'aṣiba* (God give you plenty, hostess of mine!). The lady will always reply with a *hanni wa 'a'afiah* or *'alaikum al 'a'afiah* (may you be satisfied!).

Having enjoyed the shaikh's hospitality, you leave after taking coffee, and the relatives, young men, big children, etc., eat up what is left of the meal: it is always amusing to see these hang back in pretended shyness, as if to say, "You know I never came here to get a meal", when the host invites them to come forward and partake with a *Yalla ya flan, gúm*, or *Yalla ya raba'a gúmu*, or *Thafadhalu ya awlád*. He usually has to do this several times and in a rather injured voice.

The host of course does not eat with his guests, but later with the members of the family. It is always seemly for the guest, if he be a prominent person like a shaikh or Political Agent, to bring a present of rice, coffee or sugar with him for the tent. This gift he presents in casual manner before he leaves: if he wants to win more praise, he will also have brought with him materials for half a dozen frocks for the

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Bedouins MJ4

B 574 431 women of the tent. This makes him their friend for life. I always made a point of trying to do this in Kuwait.

A dinner party given by a townsman (hadhari) or better-class semi-nomad tribesman ('arabdar)

B 252 264 K 252 264 This is a very much grander affair than the preceding, and the rice is usually of the *ambar bu* kind from Iraq or North Iran. After boiling, the whole sheep is browned all over by plunging it in boiling *dehen* or *semen* (clarified butter). It may be even baked in a baker's oven, when it is known as *lahm mashwi*.

Over the rice is spread a thin layer of hot sultanas, shredded onions (fried), gram and other spices. Dried pomegranate seeds are often introduced (an unpleasant habit, as grit like sand-grains seems to have got into the food). The whole dish is surrounded with plates, or small bowls, containing various meat dishes, vegetables, sweetmeats and fruit (usually cut-up melon). The number of these dishes increases with the importance and wealth of the host. The following are the names of the more important dishes thus served:

(*a*) *Marag*—a tasty brown stew containing small lumps of meat, tomatoes (*tamáta*), egg-plant (*baitan-jan*), and ladies' fingers (*bámia*).

(*b*) *Shaikh Mahshi*—Young white pumpkins, or preferably large cucumbers, stuffed with rice, nuts, and minced meat.

(*c*) *Baragh* or *Dólma*—A mash of rice and meat wrapped up in young vine leaves, and thoroughly boiled. It is delicious to the taste. (Originally from Turkey.)

(*d*) *Tamáta marag*— is like (*a*) above, but made of tomato and onion sauce.

(*e*) *Dólmat*—Stuffed onions like (*c*) above.

(*f*) *Kabáb*—Meat, rice and sultana rissoles.

(*g*) *Mahallibi*—Ground rice or arrowroot cooked in milk and flavoured with cardamum, and sometimes with chopped pistachio nuts.

(*h*) *Mahallibi wa Záfáran*—Like (*g*) mixed with saffron to colour it yellow.

(*i*) *Harís*—A kind of crushed corn-and-meat porridge, very nourishing.

B 264 K 264 Interspersed with the above are plates of dates (*tamar*), bowls of sour milk (*leben*), grapes, sections of melon (if in season), also large flat thin wafers of unleavened bread or thick round flat oven-made

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Muntafiq

484 462 way back to their tents. No one ever molests them, and it would go hard with a mere man who attempted to interfere with a bevy of these tribal lasses on the march.

Hukra tents are not pitched close together, but in ones and twos, 361 233 each in sight of a neighbour. This enables one tent dweller to come to the assistance of his neighbours all round him if necessary. The result is that large areas of desert country are dotted as far as the eye can see with little specks of two or three or even one black tent. The above method of scattering widely is in vogue only if peace reigns in the land. It is healthy, sheep are not crowded together, and grazing is systematically gone over.

[722] Were there to be war, or even a rumour of war in the air, the shepherd tribes would either concentrate closer together by day and night, or make for home again.

221 233 The return to Iraq of the shepherd tribes takes place usually about the end of April or early in May when water becomes scarce and sheep have to get back to the Euphrates before the desert grazing dries up.

439 Just as they have made wool, butter, milk, mutton, etc., cheap in Kuwait, so with the money realised they take home rice, sugar, coffee, clothes for their women and girls, and presents for those who stayed behind. Their return home, therefore, though bad for Kuwait, is a joyous one for their relatives on the Euphrates.

651 648 431 To ensure good treatment for themselves in Kuwait and Sa'udi Arabia, the Hukra pay *dhablhal wa manlhah*, consisting of gifts of young lambs, to the local Governor or Ruler, and they also pay *zakat* voluntarily, if unrest is in the air and they want to receive serious protection from possible raiders. The Sa'udi Government officials are stern in the enforcement of *zakat*, but the Shaikh of Kuwait, whose state derives benefit from the Iraq shepherds, always waives his right to it.

836 Kuwait is definitely the poorer for the annual departure of the Hukra, and their return the following year is always looked forward to by the majority of the people. Not the least to be missed are the merry laughing faces of these daughters of the Muntafiq on the Jahrah–Kuwait road, who joke with everybody and miss no opportunity of displaying pretty eyes and dainty tattoo-covered chins and